

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A wear assembly for excavating equipment comprising a support structure, a wear member mounted on the support structure and a lock releasably securing the wear member on the support structure, the support structure and the wear member cooperatively defining an opening for receiving the lock, the lock comprising a wedge having a leading end, a trailing end, a length extending between the leading and trailing ends, and a rounded cross section, the wedge tapering that tapers toward one end the leading end along substantially the entire length, the wedge and being formed with a first helical thread formation that extends axially along an exterior surface of the wedge, the helical thread being is threadedly coupled to a second thread formation in the opening such that rotation of the wedge moves the wedge into the opening to tighten the lock in the opening.

2. (currently amended) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 1 wherein the first helical thread formation on the wedge is defined by a helical groove.

3. (original) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 2 wherein the groove has a large pitch so that a substantial portion of the exterior surface of the wedge exists between each pair of turns of the groove to provide a bearing surface for the lock.

4. (previously presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 1 further comprising a spool fit between the wedge and a wall of the opening, the wedge being movable along the spool as the wedge is tightened in the opening.

5. (currently amended) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 4 wherein the first helical thread formation on the wedge is defined by a helical groove.

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6. (currently amended) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 5 wherein the second thread formation in the opening is formed on the spool as at least one projection to engage the groove.

7. (currently amended) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 6 further including a retainer for holding the look in a tightened condition in the opening to resist loosening of the wedge.

8. (previously presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 7 wherein the wedge includes a series of teeth and the retainer includes a resiliently biased detent to engage the teeth.

9. (original) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 8 wherein the teeth are formed in the groove.

10. (original) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 9 wherein the engagement of the detent with the teeth permits rotation of the wedge in only one direction.

11. (previously presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 7 wherein the retainer is mounted on the wear member.

12. (previously presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 7 wherein the retainer is mounted on the spool.

13. (original) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 4 wherein the spool engages the wear member and the wedge engages the support structure.

14. (original) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 4 wherein the spool has a generally C-shaped configuration that includes a body and a pair of arms.

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15. (original) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 4 further including an insert that engages the wedge opposite the spool.

16. (currently amended) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 4 wherein the ~~first helical thread on the wedge formation~~ is a helical ridge and the ~~second thread formation in the opening~~ is a groove structure.

17. (original) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 16 further including an insert that engages the wedge opposite the spool.

18. (original) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 17 wherein the insert includes a groove structure to receive the helical ridge.

19. (original) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 4 wherein the spool is integrally formed with the wear member.

20. (original) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 19 wherein the spool and the wear member are cast as a one-piece member.

21. (original) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 4 further including a cradle to contact the wedge along a side opposite the spool, the cradle having a front surface that is curved generally about a transverse axis to better accommodate shifting of the vertical orientation of the lock during use.

22. (original) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 21 further comprising an insert between the front of the opening and the cradle, the insert having a rear surface that complements the front surface of the cradle.

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23. (original) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 21 wherein the front face of the cradle includes a curved concave surface generally about the transverse axis.

24. (withdrawn) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 21 wherein the front face of the cradle includes a curved convex surface about the transverse axis.

25. (withdrawn) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 21 wherein the front face of the cradle has curved portions that are offset relative to each other.

26. (original) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 1 wherein the wear member is a point and the support structure is an adapter that attach together to form an excavating tooth.

27. (original) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 1 wherein the wear member is an adapter and the support structure is a lip of an excavating bucket.

28. (currently amended) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 1 further including a retainer for ~~holding the lock in a tightened condition in the opening to resist~~ loosening of the wedge.

29. (currently amended) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 1 wherein the first helical thread on the wedge formation is a tapping thread.

30. (previously presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 1 further comprising means for effecting shifting of the vertical orientation of the wedge as the wear member shifts on the support structure.

31. (original) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 1 further including a cradle to contact the wedge along a front side thereof, the cradle having a front surface that is curved

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generally about a transverse axis to better accommodate shifting of the vertical orientation of the lock during use.

32. (original) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 31 further comprising an insert between the front of opening and the cradle, the insert having a rear surface that complements the front surface of the cradle.

33. (original) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 31 wherein the front face of the cradle includes a curved concave surface generally about the transverse axis.

34. (withdrawn) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 31 wherein the front face of the cradle includes a curved convex surface generally about the transverse axis.

35. (withdrawn) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 31 wherein the front face of the cradle has curved portions that are offset relative to each other.

36. (previously presented) A wear assembly for excavating equipment comprising a support structure, a wear member having a front working portion and a rear portion configured to mount on the support structure, and a lock releasably securing the wear member on the support structure, the support structure and the wear member cooperatively defining an opening for receiving the lock, the lock comprising a wedge that tapers toward one end and is movable into the opening to tighten the lock in the opening, and a cradle fit between the wedge and the front of the opening, the cradle having a curved front surface generally about a transverse axis to fit against a complementary surface in the opening to effect shifting of the vertical orientation of the wedge as the wear member shifts longitudinally on the support structure during use.

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37. (original) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 36 further comprising an insert between the front of the opening and the cradle, the insert having a rear surface that complements the front surface of the cradle.

38. (original) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 36 wherein the front face of the cradle includes a curved concave surface generally about the transverse axis.

39. (withdrawn) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 36 wherein the front face of the cradle includes a curved convex surface generally about the transverse axis.

40. (withdrawn) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 36 wherein the front face of the cradle has curved portions that are offset relative to each other.

Claims 41-52 (cancelled).

53. (currently amended) A method of attaching a wear member to a support structure for use with excavating equipment comprising

placing the wear member on the support structure such that formations in the wear member and the support structure cooperatively define an opening,

inserting a wedge that is tapered toward one end and has a first thread formation into the opening having a leading end, a trailing end, a length extending between the leading and trailing ends, and a rounded cross section, the wedge tapering toward the leading end along substantially the entire length, and being formed with a helical thread that extends axially along an exterior surface of the wedge.

threadedly coupling the helical thread to such that the first thread formation threadedly engages a second thread formation in the opening, and

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rotating the wedge when in the opening to drive the wedge further into the opening to tightly retain the wear member on the support structure.

54. (currently amended) A method in accordance with claim 53 further comprising inserting a spool into the opening, the spool having the second thread formation in the opening to threadedly engage the wedge.

55. (currently amended) A method in accordance with claim 54 further including a retainer to ~~secure the wedge in a tightened condition~~ resist loosening of the wedge.

56. (currently amended) A method in accordance with claim 53 further including a retainer to ~~secure the wedge in a tightened condition~~ resist loosening of the wedge.

57. (previously presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 36 wherein the wear member is an adapter and the support structure is a lip of an excavating bucket.

58. (previously presented) A method in accordance with claim 53 wherein the wear member is a point and the support structure is an adapter that attach together to form an excavating tooth.

59. (previously presented) A method in accordance with claim 53 wherein the wear member is an adapter and the support structure is a lip of an excavating bucket.

60. (previously presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 4 wherein the spool includes a retainer for resisting loosening of the wedge in the opening.

61. (currently amended) A new wear assembly in accordance with claim 60 wherein the spool has a generally C-shaped configuration that includes a body and a pair of arms.

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62. (previously presented) A wear assembly in accordance with claim 61 wherein the arms each include an inner edge that faces toward the other arm, and wherein the inner edges diverge from each other as they extend away from the body.

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